

STATINTL

Allen - Scott Report

Reds Stall Air Agreement

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WASHINGTON—Despite those published reports to the contrary, Russia—and not the U. S.—is holding up the signing of the air agreement permitting an exchange of commercial flights between Moscow and New York.

While the White House is privately prodding U. S. negotiators to reach an immediate agreement, Premier Khrushchev is stalling until his technicians iron out the bugs in their heretofore new IL-62 supersonic airliner.

U. S. negotiators report that Khrushchev is delaying the signing until the Russians can cap the U. S.-Soviet air accord with a smashing propaganda victory by landing the world's first supersonic airliner in New York.

If U. S. intelligence estimates are anywhere near correct, this major air fact is still several months off, since the 1,500-mile-an-hour IL-62 is plagued with both mechanical and equipment troubles.

The 200-passenger plane is reportedly having serious difficulty taking off and landing with less than half the fuel needed to fly from Moscow to the U. S.

There have been so many equipment failures on the Soviet airliner while in the air that it now takes an average of a week to overhaul the huge plane after each flight. Without this inch-by-inch checking, the big four-engined jet would be unsafe for flying long distances.

In sharp contrast, Pan American Airways, which will serve as the U. S. commercial carrier, is ready now to use its fully tested pure-jet Boeing 707 on the

The sleek 707, in operational use for several years, can make the non-stop flight in about 8½ hours eastbound and 10 hours westbound, or a full two to four hours less than the TU-144—the best Soviet plane now in operation.

By pressing into service the new four-jet IL-62, the Russians expect to cut their air time from Moscow to New York in half—giving Aeroflot, their government airline, a big speed advantage over the Pan American jet. REVERSE ENGINES

Sen. Thomas Dodd, D-Conn., most outspoken opponent of the proposed air agreement, is taking advantage of Khrushchev's haggling to petition President Johnson to call off the negotiations.

In a memorandum to the White House, Dodd expressed the hope that the President "will pause to weigh the potential disadvantages of the proposed agreement against any conceivable advantages before we commit ourselves to a course which, I am certain, we will live to regret."

He pointed out that Russia will use the new air rights to

step up espionage activities in the U. S., warning:

UN staffs number several hundred people. If they shuttle between New York and Moscow twice a week in their old planes, think of how much secret material, military secrets, scientific and technical data, and other valuable information gathered for them by their friends and operations in this country, they could tuck away without detection. They would be able to carry away tons of so-called 'diplomatic mail'."

"If the U. S. goes through with the signing of the agreement," Dodd stressed, "all Latin American countries will follow suit, making the task of fighting Communist subversion and espionage in these countries almost impossible."

NO JUSTIFICATION

Dodd charged that the agreement cannot be justified "in terms of Soviet tourist traffic to the U. S., because in recent years this has amounted to less than 150 persons a year."

"On the other hand," he pointed out, "American tourist traffic to the Soviet Union ran approximately 15,000 in 1963. In order to operate commercial flights to the U. S. on a profitable basis, Aeroflot would have to bid for a substantial chunk of this U. S. tourist traffic."

While President Johnson has not yet replied to Dodd's memorandum, Ambassador Foy Koh-

ler is still pushing the negotiations. He is trying to get the Russians to sign the air pact before they make one with Canada.

The Soviet-Canadian agreement, giving the Russians a direct air route to Montreal, is scheduled to be announced in July.

Under its unannounced terms a Canadian airline will be permitted to fly to Moscow via Peking, as well as directly to Russia. This secret Chinese Communist collaboration with the Russians in arranging the air route with the Canadians has cast new doubt on whether there really is a deep Soviet-Chinese split.

ON THE ALERT

Rep. Carl Vinson, D-Ga., chairman of the House Armed Services Committee, has asked the Defense Department for a full report on whether small planes have been able to fly from Cuba to Florida without being detected by the Air Force's air defense system. The request was made after a Florida pilot claimed that he flew his small aircraft to Cuba and back without being detected. . . . A revolutionary design for a supersonic aircraft called "Waverider" has been produced in Great Britain. The wings of the plane fold downward into an inverted V at takeoff. The design is based on using the shock waves of supersonic flight to provide the lift for the aircraft instead of setting up a terrific drag as at present.